

Frequently Asked Questions—Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements



What is the Great Lakes Charter Annex?

The Great Lakes Charter Annex (Annex) is an agreement signed by all eight Great Lakes Governors as well as the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec in 2001 to help protect, conserve, restore and improve the Great Lakes Basin* for future generations.

Why was the Annex created?

There are many threats to the waters of the Great Lakes Basin and they promise to increase. The Great Lakes Basin waters are critical to the health of our region and its economy. The Governors and Premiers created the forward-looking Annex to take steps that will help avoid conflicts and shortages in the future and protect the resource and related ecosystems.

What does the Annex do?

The Annex was the first part of a two-step process. It updated the way the Great Lakes Basin should be protected. However, it did not outline the specifics of how to protect it. After signing the Annex, the Governors and Premiers identified the second step, creating a plan to put the Annex in motion, which would include a common decision-making standard.

What's next?

Since the signing of the Annex, the Governors' and Premiers' staffs have been developing agreements to create a management process for regulating water diversions and withdrawals from the Great Lakes Basin. These agreements will ensure that authority over the Great Lakes remains with the Governors and Premiers. Once signed, the new agreements will provide the framework for each State and Province to pass laws that will protect the Great Lakes Basin.

Who else is involved?

This process has involved a wide range of interested parties participating on the Advisory Committee. Participants range from the environmental and business communities to the agriculture, municipal water supply and shipping industries. Additionally, the Governors' and Premiers' staffs have consulted the Tribes and First Nations throughout the region.

Is this really necessary?

Absolutely. Threats to the water levels of the Great Lakes will undoubtedly increase in the future and we must act now to put the proper measures in place so we are prepared to deal with them.

What does all of this mean for me?

The new agreements will protect the waters of the Great Lakes Basin now and into the future. They will help ensure the Great Lakes remain at safe and healthy levels for future generations.

What happens after the draft agreements are released?

Beginning this summer, there will be regional, State and Provincial public meetings. These meetings will be an opportunity for everyone to view and comment on the work that has been done thus far. Once the public comments have been taken into account, the Governors and Premiers will revise and sign the final agreements.

**The Great Lakes Basin is the region of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River (upstream from Trois-Rivières, Québec) surrounding each body of water, where water drains toward the Lakes and the River.*